



Roanoke Colonies Research Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 1

November 1993

Roanoke Colonies Research Office Established at ECU

As you may already know, on July 1, 1993, following the May Roanoke Decoded symposium in which many of you participated, the local advisory committee selected by the symposium participants met to discuss where to go from here. Hosted by Dr. Keats Sparrow, dean of the East Carolina University College of Arts and Sciences, the one-day meeting resulted in the establishment of the Roanoke Colonies Research Office as part of the university's Institute for Historical and Cultural Research.

As those who met on the ECU campus in July suggested, we will begin by publishing a research newsletter and by organizing triennial interdisciplinary conferences on Roanoke colonies studies. The two initial projects are meant to correct the one shared complaint voiced amidst great praise for the Roanoke Decoded symposium: that the participating scholars were unable to attend one another's presentations.

While Roanoke Decoded provided an excellent opportunity for the general public to hear about the research many of us are doing, it also pointed out how little opportunity we scholars have had to keep up with the work in which others are engaged.

Office Administration and Oversight

I have been asked to serve as the institute's director of the Roanoke Colonies Research Office. As a young scholar who researches early English and Spanish exploration literature of North America, I am excited about having the chance to be involved in an important way with a project such as this.

David S. Phelps, one of the Roanoke Decoded symposium participants, professor of anthropology at East Carolina University, and associate director of the university's Institute for Historical and Cultural Research, will oversee the Roanoke Colonies Research Office for the Institute for Historical and Cultural Research.

Phelps has appointed an advisory committee of scholars for the Roanoke Colonies Research Office. It has been established to offer advice concerning publications, conferences, and other projects that the office will be engaged in. Agreeing to serve are Karen Kupperman of the University of Connecticut; Ivor Noël-Hume of the Virginia Company Foundation; David S. Phelps of East Carolina University; William S. Powell, emeritus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; David Beers Quinn, emeritus of the University of Liverpool; David Stick of Manteo, North Carolina; and Helen Wallis, retired from the British Library Map Room. Committee members will serve three-year terms that will rotate on a staggered schedule.

Assisting with the administration of the office will be Bebe B. Woody, cultural resource management specialist with the National Park Service at the Fort Raleigh National Historic Site and one of the organizers of the original Roanoke Decoded symposium. She will serve as liaison between the office and the National Park Service as well as serve as an associate editor for the newsletter.

Call for Assistance

Please submit any materials you think would be appropriate for the newsletter—offprints of articles to be abstracted, descriptions of research you are presently engaged in, announcements of publication and paper presentation opportunities, and so forth—as well as suggestions concerning the general content of the newsletter.

All participants in the Roanoke Decoded symposium have been placed on the newsletter's mailing list; however, if you know of other scholars who were not participants but are engaged in studies related to Roanoke colonization, please let us know so their names can be added to the mailing list. We would like to bring together a broad range of scholars—people working in a variety of disciplines as well as both beginning and well-established researchers.

In addition, if you have suggestions or ideas about other responsibilities the Roanoke Colonies Research Office could or should assume, please let us know. At least one of our future projects is compiling a computerized bibliographic database of materials relating to the various Roanoke colonization efforts. Suggestions about other possible future projects will be appreciated.

To contact us, please write or call our office:

Dr. E. Thomson Shields, Jr.
c/o Department of English
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC 27858-4353
Telephone: 919-757-6715 or 919-757-6041
Fax: 919-757-4889
Electronic Mail: ENSHIELD@ECUVMI (Bitnet)
ENSHIELD@ECU.CIS.ECU.EDU (Internet)

We look forward to serving as a conduit for information, helping us all keep in closer communication about the work we are doing concerning the Roanoke colonies. The Roanoke Decoded symposium, rather than being a presentation of conclusive findings, thus is a beginning for even more exciting research and discussion ahead.

Roanoke Colonies Research Newsletter

Editorial Staff

Editor:

E. Thomson Shields, Jr., East Carolina University

Associate Editor:

Bebe B. Woody, National Park Service

Assistant Editor:

John Patterson, East Carolina University

...

Roanoke Colonies Research Office Advisory Committee

Karen Kupperman, University of Connecticut

Ivor Noël-Hume, Virginia Company Foundation

David S. Phelps, East Carolina University

William S. Powell, Emeritus, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

David Beers Quinn, Emeritus, University of Liverpool

David Stick, Independent Scholar, Manteo, North Carolina

Helen Wallis, Retired, Map Room, British Library

FROM THE EDITOR

Bebe B. Woody reports from the National Park Service office at Fort Raleigh, "It is with much relief that we can report all is safe and sound here on Roanoke Island. Though Hurricane Emily passed close offshore, its effects were minimal. However, just south of us at Cape Hatteras the storm vented much of its force, and there was considerable damage both to homes and businesses. The good news is that no one was hurt, and all are working together to overcome their losses." While it is a relief that Roanoke Island suffered minimal damage during late August's brush with Hurricane Emily, the tropical storm also served as a reminder of how susceptible coastal islands—especially those with historical and archaeological importance—can be to the whims of nature.

...

According to the Associated Press on October 3, 1993, it appears that Currituck County's Banker horses will lose some ground but gain security. The AP writes that "federal, state and local officials and the Corolla Wild Horse Fund have endorsed a proposal to move most of the horses to undeveloped land north of [the town of] Corolla—and to extend a fence from the Atlantic into Currituck Sound to keep them there." Presently, a fence stretches almost from the sound to the ocean, but until now the state would not issue permits to build fences across sand dunes. This left an area where the horses would simply run around the end of the fence.

Thirteen of the Corolla area horses have been killed in automobile accidents since 1989. The development of the Outer Banks' northernmost town and the opening of its main road to public traffic in 1984 have been the cause of many problems for the horses. Attracted by the new developments'

landscape grasses, the horses have been coming into town where they are vulnerable.

A few will be corralled on county land near the Corolla Lighthouse. Horses from the newly fenced-in range will be rotated in and out from the corral.

...

One important part of scholarly work that we should not forget is that there is an audience beyond the scholarly community for our research. The lay audience is made up of friends who support and enjoy learning by our work. One such person is Betty Cumming, the widow of the historical cartographer William P. Cumming; she attended the Roanoke Decoded symposium as a special guest. Mrs. Cumming published an article about the symposium in her retirement community's newsletter, excerpts of which follow:

East and forever east, my son, Bob, and I rolled across green North Carolina toward the sea. Piedmont gave way to coastal plain; Metrolina and red soil, to villages and sandy fields; the air cleared, and we began to smell the salt. Then out, across a series of bridges so long and curved that it seemed as if we had put to sea in our car; a larger island, Roanoke; a stretch of forest; and we were driving down the main street of a modest town, the easternmost of the state, to a collection of low, weathered inns and houses, bright with flowers, signed "Manteo Historic Waterfront". . . .

This was our entrance to the Symposium called "Roanoke Decoded," sponsored by the National Park Service and the Eastern National Park and Monument Association, and funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and other generous donors.

And who was there? The people of Roanoke, old descendants and modern converts . . . the historical scholars, who dig in Spanish and English archives to find these colonists; the archaeologists, still digging in Roanoke ground for traces of their life; the cartographers, like my husband, who dig in old maps for reasons for their actions. The National Park keepers were there, keeping watch; the dramatists and singers who have kept alive for years the waterside drama of *The Lost Colony*; the educators, and crowds of their young teachers, rapt with eagerness to enliven their classes in North Carolina history. There was a local actress who presented a most effective mono-drama of Queen Elizabeth I in the Raleigh years; a great chorus; and even a geneticist of the wild Banko horses! . . .

A half dozen very distinguished English scholars had been brought over. Professor D. B. Quinn, probably the leading authority in the world on the Roanoke voyages, had brought his frail little wife in a wheelchair; we renewed an intimate friendship. On the American side, we had scholars from Chapel Hill, William and Mary, the University of Georgia, the great Newberry Library in Chicago. On the last morning, David Stick, long-time Banko resident and author, monitored a discussion of what further research should be done; our friend Helen Wallis of the British Library smuggled Bob and me in for that. It was a rich time. And did they settle the fate of the Lost Colony? You will be glad to hear that North Carolina still has its mystery; but we are alive with suggestions.

("Roanoke Island," *The Pinepost*, The Pines at Davidson)

...

Boundary Expansion: Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, Dare County, North Carolina

by Bebe B. Woody

Fort Raleigh National Historic Site was established on April 5, 1941, to preserve a nationally important historical site for the inspiration and benefit of all people. The primary resources responsible for the establishment of the site were those that are associated with the first English attempt at colonization of the New World.

A collateral purpose in establishing the park was to honor an agreement with the Roanoke Island Historical Association by continuing to provide a site for the annual presentation of the outdoor pageant-drama, *The Lost Colony*. On October 27, 1990, another act was passed that authorized the addition of approximately 335 acres to Fort Raleigh National Historic Site and expanded the purpose of the park.

Much of what we know about historical events on the north end of Roanoke Island has centered around the first attempt at English colonization. With the newly acquired lands, we can now explore other historically significant activities that have occurred on this tiny island. The following highlights just some of those times and events.

Native American History

For many years, Indian artifacts have been found throughout the north end of Roanoke Island. Indian tribes occupying Roanoke Island were Algonquins and were known as the Roanoke and Croatoan tribes. In 1887, Talcott Williams discovered an Indian burial ground near the present day Fort Raleigh National Historic Site. More recently, other burial grounds have been discovered and investigated by archaeologists, but much has been lost because the finds were outside the park's boundaries and unprotected. Very little is known about the history of these Indians. Their lifestyles while inhabiting this island, why they disappeared, and where they moved remain a mystery. It is important that we begin to gather and study this fragile information to better understand the earliest Americans and their relationship with European settlers.

Early European Exploration and Settlement

The site of the first pre-colonial English effort to settle in the New World has undergone surprisingly little change over the past 400 years. The Indians, the colonists, the American Civil War troops, the Freedmen's colony, and the farmers who successively occupied these lands altered vegetation and left their imprint; but each has been a shadowy and light overlay of history.

The exact location of one of the sixteenth-century colonial forts is known and protected within Fort Raleigh National Historic Site. The location of the pre-colonial village has never been found; however, in recent years significant discoveries have been made through archaeological investigations under the direction of archaeologist Ivor Noël-Hume. The newly acquired lands may well provide us with new evidence of the colonial village.

Civil War History

Roanoke Island's strategic geographical location almost necessitated the island's use during the Civil War as a military bastion to control the sounds and navigable rivers of northeastern North Carolina. Confederate troops established defensive fortifications and bases on the island in 1861. Soon thereafter, in 1862, Union forces attacked and captured the area and held it for the duration of the war. Much of the Confederate-Union camp, which consisted of barracks, wharves, landing docks, and a hospital, was located between the northwest point and Fort Raleigh. The two-hundred-acre camp included between seventy-five and eighty wooden barrack structures and a hospital.

The Freedmen's Colony

After Union forces gained control of Roanoke Island, black refugees arrived seeking haven. Hundreds and then thousands of former slaves came in hope of a new beginning. The Reverend Horace James was appointed superintendent of Negro affairs and in this capacity established a pilot freedmen's camp on the island that served as a model for future camps in other areas. Land on the north end of the island was cleared, and a village for approximately 3,000 slaves was constructed containing 591 houses, a steam saw and grist mill, school houses, store houses, and a smallpox hospital. After the war, the federal government restored the land to the original land-owners, and the camp was abandoned by the end of 1866.

Reginald Fessenden Site

Reginald Fessenden is one of the foremost American pioneers in the field of radio and electronic communications. Located within the newly acquired lands is the site of the radio tower from which he conducted his early experiments. During these experiments, Fessenden performed the first successful transmission of intelligible speech by electromagnetic waves in late 1900. As a result of his experiments, Fessenden patented many concepts fundamental to modern communication.

Natural Resources

The expansion area is characterized by a variety of natural resources. Included are the estuarine shallow water bottoms and sandy shore of Croatan Sound, estuarine marsh, ponds, scrub-shrub wetland, forested wetland, mixed hardwood forest, and evergreen forest. Numerous species of animals also inhabit the tract including passerine birds, raptors, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

The span of time and history has now expanded considerably within Fort Raleigh National Historic Site. Much has yet to be discovered, studied, and learned. We of the National Park Service welcome these new opportunities and those who wish to pursue them.

Call for Bibliographic Materials for the Roanoke Colonies Research Newsletter

The main purpose of the *Roanoke Colonies Research Newsletter* is to serve as a conduit of information concerning research being done by scholars about the various colonization efforts that occurred on Roanoke Island. To that end, annotated bibliographic entries will be a major part of all upcoming issues.

In order to make this possible, we ask that you send us notice or, preferably, copies of any articles, reports, books, or other pertinent materials so we may give full bibliographic information and an annotation. These materials need not be your own. If you come across something you think others may want to know about, please let us know.

The following examples show the types of bibliographic entries we hope to include. As can be seen, works specifically about the Roanoke colonies and works which are indirectly related to the subject are of interest.

We have decided to use the Modern Language Association bibliographic entry format; however, if bibliographic information is missing that readers in any particular field need, let us know. We can always modify the format to include added information.

Skowronek, Russell K., and John W. Walker. "European Ceramics and the Elusive 'Cittie of Raleigh.'" *Historical Archaeology* 27.1 (1993): 58-69.

Skowronek and Walker review and categorize the European-produced ceramics found thus far during the various digs at Fort Raleigh, from Jean C. Harrington's 1947 excavation to the present day. Their review of the European-produced ceramics leads them to the conclusion that because the vast majority of artifacts come from the area directly to the west of the fort, future investigations looking for the "Cittie of Raleigh," where colonists from the 1585 and 1587 expeditions lived, should expand upon the earlier test excavations done to the west of the fort.

Shields, E. Thomson, Jr. "East Makes West: Images of the Orient in Early Spanish and English Literature of North America." *Medievalia et Humanistica* n.s. 19 (1992): 97-116.

Shields examines the influence that the European desire for commodities from Asia had on the literature about the northern part of the Americas, from 1492 until the early eighteenth century. He argues that the desire for Oriental commodities was taken to the extent of describing the New World as if it were literally Asia. Of interest for Roanoke colonies studies are discussions of Thomas Harriot's images of possible silk production on Roanoke Island and of the opening to Robert Beverly's *History and Present State of Virginia* (1705) describing pre-1584 Roanoke Island as a literal Garden of Eden and Native Americans as prelapsarians, ruined by the 1584 arrival of English explorers.

Lawson, Sarah, trans. *A Foothold in Florida: The Eye-Witness Account of Four Voyages Made by the French to the Region and Their Attempt at Colonisation, 1562-1568*. Annotated and Appendices by W. John Faupel. East Grinstead, England: Antique Atlas Publications.

The advertisement states that this work is "based on a new translation of Laudonnière's [1586 work] *L'histoire notable de la Floride*." Included in this edition are illustrations by Jacques le Moyne which, along with John White's Roanoke drawings, provide the basic visual portrait of sixteenth-century southeastern North America, especially Native American society. The book is available from the publisher: Antique Atlas Publications, 31a High Street, East Grinstead, W. Sussex, RH19 3AF, England (Telephone: 0-342-315-813; Fax: 0-342-318-058). The price of the volume is £25, plus postage and tax.

Five works are either available or should be available soon from the Durham Thomas Harriot Seminar:

Abraham, Lyndy. *Literary Images from Alchemical Manuscripts in Harriot's Time*.

Aiton, Eric. *Astronomy in the Time of Harriot*.

Binns, James. *Latin Culture in Harriot's Time*.

Salmon, Vivian. *Thomas Harriot and the English Origins of Algonkian Linguistics*.

Taunton, Nina. *Renaissance Discourses on War*.

For price and availability (in Great Britain, each volume runs £2), contact Professor G. R. Batho, School of Education, University of Durham, Durham, DH1 1TA, England.

Shoreline Conference to be Held

The Roanoke Colonies Research Office and the National Park Service, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, are jointly sponsoring the Fort Raleigh Shoreline Conference, an invitational working conference on shoreline erosion on cultural remains along the north shore of Roanoke Island. The conference, will be held at the Fort Raleigh Visitor Center on Friday, December 10, 1993.

Participants will begin the conference with a tour of the shore between Dough's Point and Waterside Theatre, hear informal presentations on past research into cultural and natural processes, and discuss future research needs. Compilation of a working bibliography of research and information related to the erosion problem is one major goal of the conference.

Presentations summarizing past and present research on the geological, geographical, and archaeological aspects of north shore erosion and a current shoreline computer mapping project will be given by Stanley R. Riggs (geology), Robert Dolan (erosion patterns), David S. Phelps (archaeology), and Nick Lucchetti (computer mapping).

Other invited participants include Louis Devorsey, John Ehrenhard, Ivor Noël-Hume, Gerald Johnson, Bennie Keel, William Kelso, and David Stick.

For additional information, contact Bebe B. Woody or David S. Phelps.

300 copies of this document were produced at a cost of \$57, or 19¢ per copy.

Last Minute Information

The Roanoke Colonies Research Office is looking for a graphic to use on the *Roanoke Colonies Research Newsletter's* nameplate and, possibly, letterhead. The graphic is intended to present the newsletter and office's identity as a source for scholars from a variety of disciplines and from throughout the United States and the world investigating the many different subjects related to colonization on Roanoke Island.

We are asking for your help in coming up with an appropriate graphic. Anyone with an idea, rough sketch, or completed drawing is invited to submit it to the office for consideration.

* * *

The Internet electronic mail address for the Roanoke Colonies Research Office as given in the newsletter is missing two letters. The correct address is as follows:

ENSHIELD@ECUVM.CIS.ECU.EDU